

Statistics

Population (2003)

Alabama: 3,183,114 metro (1.3% of total U.S. metro)
1,317,638 non-metro (2.7% of total U.S. non-metro)
 4,500,752 total

United States: 241,395,996 metro
49,413,781 non-metro
 290,809,777 total

Farm-Related Employment (2000)

Alabama: 450,851 jobs (18.5% of total Alabama employment)
 United States: 25,834,574 jobs (15.6% of total U.S. employment)

Number of Farms (2002)

Alabama: 45,126 (2.1% of total U.S. farms)
 United States: 2,128,574

Average Farm Size (2002)

Alabama: 197 acres
 United States: 441 acres

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (2002)

Alabama: \$3.3 billion
 United States: \$200.6 billion

Rank among all States in market value of agricultural products sold (2002): #23

Top 5 Agricultural Commodities (2002)

Commodity	Value of receipts (thousand \$)	Percent of U.S. value
Broilers	1,608,480	12.0

Cattle and calves	304,698	0.8
Chicken eggs	296,530	7.0
Greenhouse/nursery	243,234	1.7
Cotton	128,718	3.3

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold Directly to Consumers (2002)

Alabama: \$8 million
United States: \$812.2 million

Farmers Markets (2004)

Alabama: 72
United States: 3,617

Market Value of Certified Organic Commodities (2002)*

Alabama: \$186,000
United States: \$392.8 million

*(Data may not reflect actual industry growth after Oct. 2002 implementation of USDA National Organic Program.)

Certified Organic Acreage (2001)

Alabama: 35
United States: 2,343,857

USDA-Accredited Organic Certifying Agents (2005)

Based in Alabama: 0
Total: 96

Marketing Products and Services

Specific to Alabama

AMS Helps Design Alabama Farmers Market

In February 2006, an AMS architect facilitated a cooperative planning meeting to design an expansion of the Alabama Farmers Market in Birmingham. The market is owned and managed by the Jefferson County Truck Growers' Association, a farmer's cooperative. Both a wholesale and a farmers market, the Alabama Farmers Market houses more than 500 farmers and vendors on its 33-acre site, making it the largest market in the State. The cooperative planning meeting brought together several architects and many other interested parties to plan the new design.

Bio-Energy Project Gets National Attention

In 2004, AMS's Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program awarded a grant to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, in cooperation with Auburn University, to analyze the market for biomass derived from switchgrass and agricultural and forestry by-products, and assess the market for power generated from biomass as an alternative input for coal fired power plants. Dr. David Bransby, professor of Agronomy and Soils at Auburn University, and manager of this project, reports that after President Bush mentioned switchgrass as a bio-mass energy source in his 2006 State of the Union Address, he has been interviewed on National Public Radio, and that Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions and Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman participated in a media event at the Auburn University switchgrass research facility in February.

Alabama Farmers Attend Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Conference

In December 2005, the *Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Conference* was held in Mobile, Alabama. The conference was hosted by the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; agriculture departments from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana; and the Gulf South Blueberry Growers Association. It brought southern fruit and vegetable growers together to learn methods of improving their farm operations. AMS representatives chaired two sessions. One session discussed minority farming outreach programs. The other session, titled "Organic—What Does It Really Mean?" introduced organic agriculture and its potential for small farmers.

Community Outreach Conference

An AMS staff member gave a talk on the growth of farmers markets and outreach efforts in November 2005 at the third annual Community Outreach conference. The theme of this year's conference was *Effective Strategies for Sustaining Small and Limited Resource Farms*. Topics included marketing to niche markets, direct markets, and alternative markets. The conference is sponsored by Alabama A&M University.

Youth Motivation Conference

AMS provided an information booth at the Youth Motivation Task Force conference in Huntsville in October 2005. The booth told attendees about job opportunities with USDA, and gave an overview of AMS resources available to youths. The conference brought students together with representatives of private and government organizations to discuss career options and goals. Other conference sponsors include the Raytheon Company and the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service.

Montgomery Farmers Market

AMS conducted a feasibility study with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries to assess how the State Farmers Market in Montgomery could be updated and/or expanded.

Retail Markets in Central and Southern Counties

AMS is conducting research to determine the feasibility of upgrading an underused truckers shed and retail market facilities to support small- and medium-sized produce growers in central and southern Alabama counties.

AMS Discusses Proposed Farmers Market with Tuskegee Mayor

In May 2002, AMS staff met with Mayor Lucenia W. Dunn of Tuskegee to discuss the proposed Tuskegee Macon County Comprehensive Farmers Market. The market is intended to provide small minority and limited-resource farmers a year-round facility to market their products. AMS provided technical support and advice on developmental strategies and market analysis.

Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) Grants

FSMIP provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture and other appropriate State agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system.

- In 2005, \$68,200 was awarded to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, in cooperation with Auburn University, to analyze the market for biomass derived from by-products of agricultural and forestry production, evaluate milling and transportation requirements for several raw by-products, and assess the market for power generated from it as an alternative to coal-fired power plants.
- In 2002, \$49,500 was awarded to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, in cooperation with Alabama A&M University and Tuskegee University, to determine the market for goat meat in central Alabama and to assess its sales potential for limited resource producers seeking to diversify their operations.

General Interest

New Farm-to-School Marketing Publication

Eat Smart—Farm Fresh! A Guide to Buying and Serving Locally-Grown Produce in School Meals was published in December 2005 by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of USDA. The publication, which helps school lunch programs find locally-grown produce, was developed by a multiagency task force that included an agricultural marketing specialist from AMS, four child nutrition specialists from FNS, and the Community Food Security Coalition, a non-profit organization.

Farm-to-School Report

How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances helps small farmers and school food service buyers explore how they might establish direct marketing linkages.

Marketing via the Internet

How to Direct Market Farm Products on the Internet is designed to help small/medium-sized agricultural producers better develop Internet-based sales transactions by recommending effective methods for reaching and retaining customers.

Trends in Farmers Markets

U.S. Farmers Markets—2000: A Study of Emerging Trends assesses the importance of farmers markets as a distribution channel for farm products, documents the recent growth in farmers markets operations, and provides an updated profile of management, operations, and merchandising at farmers markets.

Market Research on Small Meat Processors

Enhancing Commercial Food Service Sales by Small Meat Processing Firms, published by AMS in cooperation with Texas A&M University, determines potential areas of competitive advantage for smaller scale meat manufacturing firms in supplying local restaurants and other local commercial food service accounts.